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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for motivating reluctant writers. The targeted population consisted of one fourth-grade and four fifth-grade classrooms in three elementary schools. All three schools were located in the western suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. The problems of reluctant writers were documented with timed writing samples, student and parent surveys, standardized test scores, and teacher observations. Analysis of probable cause data indicated that reluctant writers experience difficulties due to the following factors: spelling and handwriting problems; poor mechanical skills; lack of motivation; previous writing failure; or a fear of exposing their feelings. Indications are that some students have a conviction that writing is a mystery; it is like a secret that is never revealed to them. Therefore, they would rather give up than risk failure. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the development of a writing program that encompassed a variety of authentic writing experiences. Student writing was documented in individual portfolios. Cooperative writing activities were used to increase production, skills, motivation and confidence in writing. Post-intervention data indicated an increase in positive attitudes towards writing, increased student motivation, and confidence in writing. These behaviors were observed by the researchers, parents, and the students; the attitudes were expressed through surveys and enthusiasm in daily work. (Contains 16 references, and 1 table and 2 figures of data; appendixes contain survey instruments, writing prompts, numerous student forms, a peer revision checklist, and a writing observation checklist.) (Author)

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MOTIVATING RELUCTANT WRITERS

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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program for motivating reluctant writers. The targeted population consists of one fourth grade and four fifth grade classrooms in three elementary schools. All three schools are located in the western suburbs of Chicago. The problems of reluctant writers will be documented with timed writing samples, student and parent surveys, standardized test scores, and teacher observations.

Analysis of probable cause data indicates that reluctant writers experience difficulties due to the following factors: spelling and handwriting problems, poor mechanical skills, lack of motivation, previous writing failure, or a fear of exposing one's feelings. There are indications that some students have a conviction that writing is a mystery; it is like a secret that is never revealed to them. Therefore, they would rather give up, than risk failure.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the development of a writing program that encompasses a variety of authentic writing experiences. Student writing will be documented throughout this project in individual portfolios. Cooperative writing activities will also be utilized throughout this study in order to increase production, skills, motivation and confidence in writing.

Post-intervention data indicated an increase in positive attitudes towards writing, increased student motivation, and confidence in writing. These behaviors were observed by the researchers, parents and the students. The attitudes were expressed through surveys and enthusiasm in daily work.

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

Problem Statement

The students of the targeted fourth and fifth grade classes exhibit behaviors that show reluctance towards writing. Evidence for this problem includes teacher observations, surveys, and timed writing samples.

Immediate Problem Context: Site A

Site A is part of a community unit school district in a small town in the mid-west and is one of three elementary schools in the public school district serving grades kindergarten through fifth. The school population consists of 684 students and 39 full and part-time staff members. The racial/ethnic enrollment is 96.8 % White, 2.2% Hispanic, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0% African-American, and 0% Native American. Students of Limited English-Proficiency make up 1.3% of the school population. Low income students comprise 1.8% of the school population (Site A School Report Card, 1995).

There are 69 full and part-time staff members working together at Site A. This includes one woman principal, 3 secretaries, 29 elementary classroom teachers, 2 special education teachers, 1 social worker, 1 psychologist, 13 program assistants, 1 speech therapist, 1 bilingual teacher, 8 special area teachers, 2 nurses, 1 enrichment teacher, 1 media specialist, and 4 custodians. There are no minority teachers. The 29 regular classroom teachers have an average teaching experience of 12.9 years. Master's degrees have been earned by 53.9% of the regular classroom teachers. The average teacher salary is $42,458 with the

average administrator salary at $68,562. Site A's operating expenditure per pupil is $5,451.

The classroom teachers are responsible for a comprehensive curricula which includes accelerated programs, general programs, and modified inclusion programs. The academic curricula include integrated language, hands-on science, mathematics, social studies, computer education, health, and teacher-developed curriculum. Students receive weekly instruction from specialized teachers in three areas: one hour of music, forty minutes of art, and one hour of physical education.

Site A is a three story brick building which has recently been remodeled. It consists of five sections of kindergarten, five sections each of first, second, third, and fifth grades, and four sections of fourth grade. The average class size is 25.9 students. Attendance is 96.1%, student mobility is 9.5%, and there are no chronic truants (Site A School Report Card, 1995).

Parents are very supportive of the school and the teachers. The parents and/or guardians of 100% of the students make at least one contact with the student's teacher during the school year. They give support to the school through many extra curricular activities including after school enrichment, Book Fair, Fun Fair, monthly Market Days, skating parties, Great Books, Pirate Publishing, volunteer programs, scouting programs, clothing sales, and reading incentive programs.

Surrounding Community: Site A

Site A is located on the west side of a small city in the mid-west. It is a growing upper-middle class community approximately 40 miles west of a major metropolitan area. Although the town is landlocked on the south, the north and the east, there is land annexation and population growth to the west. Economic indicators show much growth in housing, small businesses and industries.

According to the 1992 census, the population is 14,660. The average household income is $45,242 and median home value is $147,900. The racial/ethnic population is 96.6% White, 1.0% African-American, 0.9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.1% Native American, and 1.2% others. The community school district has a total K-12 district enrollment of 3,760. There is one high school, one middle school, and three elementary schools. The district employs 432 people, 227 of whom are teachers. There is one superintendent and three assistant superintendents. The population forecast for the year 2010 is for 20,985 residents. In 1992 the community supported the development of a new middle school (Chamber of Commerce, 1992). In 1995, a referendum to add to the three existing elementary schools was successfully passed by the voters.

Immediate Problem Context: Site B

Site B is one of five elementary buildings in the community. It has a student population of 523 attending kindergarten through fifth grade. This population consists of 96.6% White students, 1.3% Asian students, 1.1% African-American students, 0.8% Native American students, and 0.2% Hispanic students. Of these students, 7.1% come from families who are considered low-income and 1.0% are eligible for bilingual education. Site B has a 96.1% attendance rate. The number of students who enroll or leave the school within the school year is 8%. Chronic truancy accounts for less than 1% of the population (Elementary Site B School Report Card, 1995).

There are 50 full and part time staff members; 42 women and 8 men working together at Site B. This includes 2 administrators, 2 secretaries, 19 elementary classroom teachers, 2 special education teachers, 1 reading specialist, 1 social worker, 1 psychologist, 6 program assistants, 1 speech therapist, 1 bilingual teacher, 9 special area teachers, a nurse, nurse's assistant, and 3 custodians. Site B's professional staff characteristics are not available; therefore the following data are district statistics. The average teaching experience is

14.3 years. Fifty-seven and six-tenths percent of the teachers have Bachelor's degrees and 42.4% have Master's degrees or higher. The classroom teachers are responsible for a comprehensive curricula which includes accelerated programs, general programs and full inclusion programs. The academic curricula includes integrated language, hands-on science, mathematics, social studies, health, and teacher developed curriculum. Students receive weekly instruction from specialized teachers in three areas: 55 minutes of music, art, and P.E. (Elementary Site B School Report Card, 1995).

Site B is a two story brick building which is 9 years old. It has 18 elementary classrooms (K-5). It consists of 4 sections of kindergarten, 3 first and second grades, 4 third grades, and 3 fourth and fifth grades. The average class size is 29.3 students. Computers are also available for classroom use. There is one gym and rooms available for art and music. The building has a playground suitable for primary and intermediate age students. There is an after school latch key program run by the YMCA held at this site.

Parents are very supportive of the school and the teachers. The parents and/or guardians of 100% of the students make at least one contact with the student's teacher during the school year. They give support to the school through many extra curricular activities including Book Fair, Fun Fair, monthly Market Days, skating parties, Great Books, volunteer programs, scouting programs, Picture Parents, Family Math and Science nights, World & Wizard newspapers, and various fund-raisers.

Surrounding Community: Site B

Surrounding Community B is nineteen miles west of a major metropolitan area and, as of May 1996, has a population of 40,870. The median age of the residents is 33 years, and the average income is $55,591. Some of the homes were built in the early 1900's while others came in the late 1950's. The average home price is $118,000. There is a minimal amount of new development coming into

this community. This community is comprised mainly of lower to middle class families, with a majority of blue collar workers (Chamber of Commerce).

The schools in community B consist of five elementary schools, two junior high schools, and one high school. The elementary and junior high schools are managed by one school district, while the high school is managed by a separate district. There is currently an overcrowding issue impacting school district B. Four out of the five elementary buildings are at or above capacity while one junior high has been projected to be overcrowded by 1999. At this time, $5,387 is spent on each student per year (Elementary District B School Report Card, 1995).

Immediate Problem Context: Site C

Site C is one of five elementary buildings in the community. It has a student population of 219 attending kindergarten through fifth grade. This population consists of 92.2% White students, 3.7% Asian/Pacific Islander students, 2.7% African-American students, 1.4% Hispanic students, and 0 Native American students. Of these students, 1.8% come from families who are considered low-income and 0% are Limited-English-Proficient. Site C has a 96.4% attendance rate. The number of students who leave the school within the school year is 1.9%. Chronic truancy accounts for 0% of the population (Elementary Site C School Report Card, 1994-1995).

There are 26 full and part-time staff members; 20 women and 6 men working together at Site C. This includes 1 administrator, 1 secretary, 9 elementary classroom teachers, 1 special education teacher, 1 speech/reading specialist, 1 social worker, 2 program assistants, 5 special area teachers, 1 learning resource director, 1 gifted instructor, a nurse, and 2 custodians. Site B's professional staff characteristics are not available; therefore the following data are district statistics.

The average teaching experience is 11.8 years. Fifty-five and two-tenths percent of the teachers have bachelor's degrees and 44.8% have master's degrees

or higher. The classroom teachers are responsible for a comprehensive curricula which includes accelerated programs, general programs and full inclusion programs. The academic curricula includes integrated language, hands-on science, mathematics, social studies, health, and teacher developed curriculum. The district is currently in the process of revising and renewing their curriculum through committees made up of staff members. Students receive weekly instruction from specialized teachers in three areas: music, art, and P.E. (Elementary Site C School Report Card, 1994-1995).

Site C is a two story brick building which is 46 years old. It has 9 elementary classrooms (K-5). It consists of 1 section of kindergarten, first and second grades, and 2 third, fourth, and fifth grades. The average class size is 20.5 students. Computers are also available in the classrooms and the learning resource center for student use. There is one gym, and art and music instruction take place in the individual classrooms. The building has a playground suitable for primary and intermediate age students. There is an after school day care program run by a local day care center held at this site.

Parents are very supportive of the school and the teachers. The parents and/or guardians of 99.5% of the students make at least one contact with the student's teacher during the school year. They give support to the school through many extra curricular activities including Book Fair, Fun Fair, monthly Market Days, office and L.R.C. volunteers, lunchroom and recess monitors, clothing sales, Parent University, and various fund-raisers.

Surrounding Community: Site C

Surrounding Community C is approximately 42 miles west of a major metropolitan area and, as of 1993, has a population of 20,236. The average income per family is $45,005. The average home price is $180,148. The development of two new subdivisions within the school district have been approved which will increase enrollment for the next several years (Chamber of Commerce).

The schools in community C are a part of a unit school district consisting of five elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Although the rate of growth has slowed over the last two years, the district continues to monitor future enrollment growth. In the event of an extreme growth in enrollment, the district is prepared with two sites suitable for the construction of new elementary schools. The high school and the middle school were designed to be expanded if deemed necessary. At this time, $5,169 is spent on each student per year (Elementary District C School Report Card, 1994-1995).

Regional and National Context of Problem

The problem of writing in the classroom has generated concern beyond the local level. As teachers, we consistently come across reluctant writers. According to Sledd (1993), "We all know the scene: a student writes a few words and stops to rummage around in her dictionary. Another student writes a line, scratches it out, and starts over, writes half a line, scratches it out. When asked to revise, a student conducts an uncertain error patrol and resubmits essentially the same piece. When asked to work collaboratively, the students sit in groups of pained silence, confronting in shared isolation the frightening and radically subjective mystery of writing."

Research shows that, "students are not as comfortable with written communication...One of the hardest jobs we have as teachers is to take very verbal children and get them to write" (Pinson, 1995, p. 66). We consistently come across this evidence of reluctance in our classrooms. Intermediate students seem to focus on the length of their compositions and writing conventions. "They begin to associate the act of writing with their struggles with mechanical skills such as handwriting, spelling, and punctuation" (Graves, 1985, p. 36). "Often they learn to compensate for their problems through avoidance. Rather than risk failure, they simply give up" (Mather & Lachowicz, 1992, p. 26).

"Students who continually fail at tasks involving written expression eventually lose their motivation to engage in writing activities" (Mather & Lachowicz, 1992, p. 26). We have always found it distressing that some children begin the school year with a negative attitude toward writing. "The motivation to write...comes from successful first experiences. But what happens...when previous school experiences have brought only failure? Often...they continue to experience failure in writing because of a lack of self-confidence" (Carignan-Belleville, 1989, p. 57).

In conclusion, we fear that students who are reluctant to write will fall farther and farther behind in their writing skills, having further difficulty as they progress through the grades. In terms of society, they will experience difficulty communicating effectively through the written word. As Muccino (1986) summarized, "In the long run, the ability to communicate through writing will improve one's quality of life academically, socially and even financially. A strong writer will have high self-esteem and the admiration of his or her peers" (p. 1).

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

In order to investigate the problem of lack of motivation to write, this research team developed four instruments. They are student writing survey, parent writing survey, timed writing sample prompts, and writing observation checklist. The parent and student writing surveys were given in September, 1996 and will be re-administered at the end of the study.

The student writing survey (Appendix A) was given to the students during the first two weeks of school. Students at all three sites were provided class time to complete the survey. It was not intended to test the writing skills of the students but was used to evaluate the students' general feelings about writing, previous experiences with writing, and what they think makes a good writer. They were given the opportunity to ask questions of the teacher.

The parent survey and permission to participate (Appendix B) in this study were handed out at Curriculum Night/Open House to be completed at home and returned to school in a timely manner. Each site received 100% of their responses returned. The parent surveys were used to evaluate the children's experiences with writing and the parents' perspectives on what were their children's abilities and opinions towards writing.

The timed writing sample prompt (Appendix C) was used as an evaluative tool. All students were given directions that they would have two minutes of "think time" and ten minutes to write about the predetermined prompt. The

student writing samples were kept in their portfolios and a similar timed writing sample will be administered at the conclusion of this project.

Each researcher will keep a writing observation checklist (Appendix E) for each participant during the four months of this project. The checklist will be used to keep track of changes in student writing behaviors.

Results of the student writing survey given in September at each of the three sites is as follows, separated by site:

At Site A, seven of a possible 25 students were targeted as reluctant writers. Five of the 7 targeted students answered "No" to the question "Are you a writer?" Six of these 7 report that spelling or proper grammar or neat penmanship make a good writer write well. These children feel that people write to "Fill in stuff," or they have "No choice," but to write. In their opinion, teachers look for proper use of capital letters and error free copies to choose good writing. These students rely on chance to decide what to write - they "Look around the room," "Just do it," or "Think and it pops up." Of these seven, 6 indicate that they never write at home and 4 do not like others reading their writing. Surprisingly, six of these 7 report feeling happy or good when writing.

At Site B, Class 1, five of a possible 25 students were targeted as reluctant writers. Four of the 5 targeted answered "No" to the question "Are you a writer?" Two of these 5 report that lots of practice and neat writing make good writers. Others commented that good writers work hard, concentrate, and write "lots" of words. These children feel that people write to share ideas and so people can read. In their opinion, teachers look for good spelling, good handwriting, and a lot of paragraphs. In order to decide what to write, these students think about ideas, look at different things, and write about things they enjoy. Of these five, 4 indicate that they never write at home and 3 do not like others reading their writing. These students have mixed feelings about writing. One feels good, one thinks it is okay, two don't like it, and one "HATS [sic] IT!"

At Site B, Class 2, five of a possible 20 students were targeted as reluctant writers. One of the 5 targeted students answered "No" to the question "Are you a writer?" One of these 5 reported that knowing grammar makes a good writer. Another student didn't know what makes a good writer. Other comments were to know spelling, be creative, and write a story that makes sense. These children feel that people write to express thoughts, feelings, emotions, for fun, to help people learn, and because they want to write. In their opinion, teachers look for spelling, creativity, and ones that have no mistakes. These students choose the best idea they have by the things they like to do, by what the teacher tells them, or by whatever comes into their heads. Of these five, two indicate that they never write at home and three do not like others reading their writing. Two of the students feel writing is fun. Another thinks it is okay. Another is happy as long as it is done. The last student had no opinion.

At Site B, Class 3, six of a possible 25 students were targeted as reluctant writers. One of the six targeted students answered "No" to the question "Are you a writer?" When asked what makes a good writer write well, the responses were varied. They included: knowing the steps, practicing, good handwriting, good imagination, and having good ideas. These children feel that people write to have fun, learn, communicate, and to become better writers. In their opinion, teachers choose good writing by looking for proper use of grammar, creativity, readability, and exciting pieces. These students rely on their feelings, ideas, and freedom of topic choice when deciding what to write. Of these six, three indicate that they never write at home and 4 do not like others reading their writing. To the amazement of the researchers, all students reported feeling good about writing, with one student indicating it was enjoyable if they like the topic they were given.

At Site C, three of a possible 15 students were targeted as reluctant writers. One of these 3 reports that correct punctuation makes a good writer write well. Another student feels that good descriptions and accurate spelling are important,

and the third student is uncertain as to what makes a good writer write well. These children feel that people write to "make stories and work," "communicate," or "because they have an idea." In their opinion, teachers look for proper use of capital letters, punctuation, and complete sentences. These students rely on what they like or whatever comes to mind to decide what to write. Of these three students, 2 indicated that they never write at home, but only one does not like others to read their writing. These students have mixed feelings about writing. One student finds it fun, another just thinks it is okay if they have a topic, and the third doesn't like to write at all.

Table 1

Pre-Intervention Parent Writing Survey

	Enjoys writing	Sees writing at home	Spelling interferes with writing
Site A	Frequently 24% Sometimes 68% Rarely 8%	Frequently 28% Sometimes 48% Rarely 24%	Frequently 12% Sometimes 36% Rarely 52%
Site B: Class 1	Frequently 24% Sometimes 64% Rarely 12%	Frequently 36% Sometimes 52% Rarely 12%	Frequently 28% Sometimes 56% Rarely 16%
Site B: Class 2	Frequently 20% Sometimes 60% Rarely 20%	Frequently 20% Sometimes 50% Rarely 30%	Frequently 55% Sometimes 30% Rarely 15%
Site B: Class 3	Frequently 22% Sometimes 52% Rarely 26%	Frequently 31% Sometimes 43% Rarely 26%	Frequently 22% Sometimes 30% Rarely 48%
Site C	Frequently 27% Sometimes 60% Rarely 13%	Frequently 20% Sometimes 73% Rarely 7%	Frequently 53% Sometimes 33% Rarely 14%

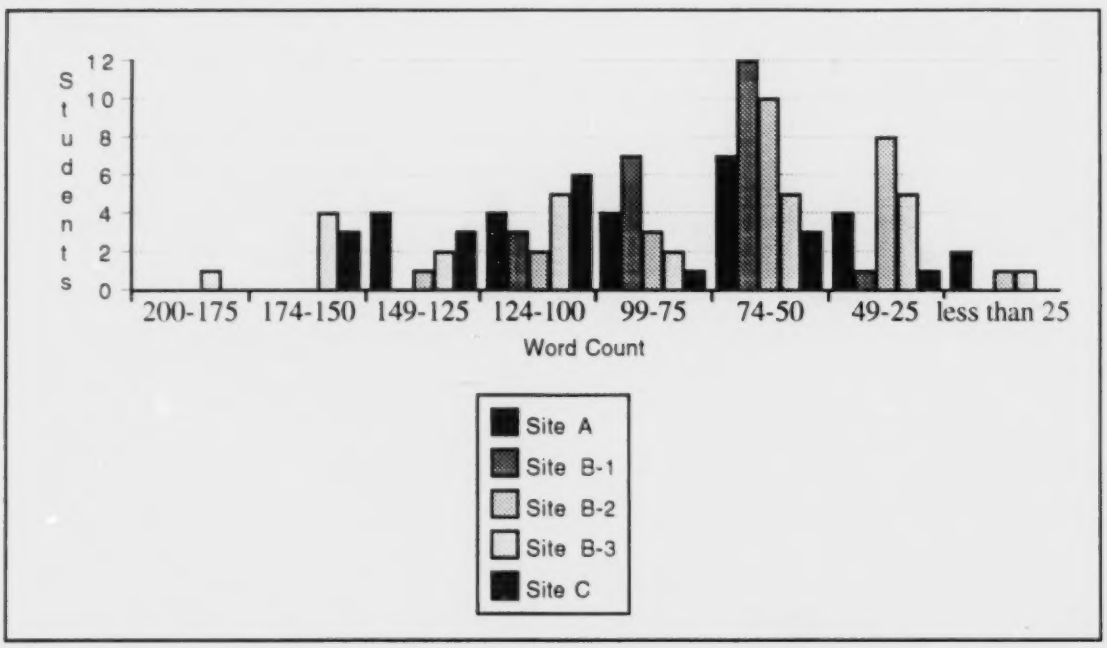
Upon examination of the results of the Parent Survey (Table 1), the researchers noted some disparity between parent perceptions. Large numbers of parents at Site A and Site B, Class 3 reported that spelling rarely interferes with

their child's writing. Whereas, at Site B, Classes 1 and 2 and Site C the numbers were significantly lower.

Timed Writing Samples were taken during the first two weeks of school. Words counted were identified by their understandability to each researcher. Spelling, grammar and punctuation problems were ignored. Whole class results are found in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Pre-Intervention Word Count Totals



At Site A, word counts ranged from 135 words to 19 words. The targeted students' word counts fell in the 57 to 19 range. Site B has three classes reporting data. Class 1 word counts ranged from 121 words to 25 words. Targeted students' word counts fell in the 69 to 25 range. Class 2 word counts ranged from 129 to 16 words. Targeted students' word counts ranged between 50 and 16 words. Class 3 word counts ranged from 194 to 43. Targeted students' word counts ranged

between 58-43. At Site C, words ranged here from 173 to 64 words. The targeted students' word counts fell in the 74-64 range.

Probable Cause

Based on the results of the collected data, we find evidence of reluctant writers in our classrooms. Each class had children who reported that they were not writers or had negative feelings towards writing. These children's word counts on the timed writing samples fell in the lower quartile of the sample. This group's parents reported that they rarely experience writing at home; spelling interferes sometimes or frequently with their child's writing.

Literature suggests that probable causes for this reluctance are varied. They include problems with mechanics, spelling and handwriting, lack of motivation, fear of making mistakes because writing serves no function other than to document failure, and/or a lack of confidence.

The roots for students' fear of writing can go deep. The fear of making mistakes and/or lack of confidence may prevent students from developing the skills needed for written language. Writing and exposing one's own thoughts is risky business (Bunce-Crim, 1991). This risk taking can lead to ridicule or exposure. Children need a predictable, safe place to expose this thinking through writing. "A writer wants response that takes the writer seriously and moves him or her forward, again, response that gives help without threatening the writer's dignity" (Atwell, 1987, p. 66).

Sledd (1993) suggests that students' fears of surface errors prevent them from tackling complex ideas in their work. Sledd further proposes that some reluctant writers have the notion that one's language indicates the state of one's mind and that surface errors make them not only look stupid, but indicate that they are stupid. Students who continually fail at tasks involving written expression eventually lose their motivation to engage in writing activities (Mather and Lachowicz, 1992).

Reluctant writers begin to associate the action of writing with their struggles with handwriting, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The motivation to write frequently comes from successful first experiences (Carignang-Belleville, 1989). Previous writing products, for reluctant writers, have frequently been returned to them full of notations and corrections for spelling, grammar, and incomplete sentences. These children's grades often are lower than they expected. For these children, writing simply has no connection to everyday events (Graves, 1994). According to Donald Graves (1985), students often compensate for their problems in writing through avoidance. Rather than risk failure, they simply give up (Kirk & Chalfax, 1984).

Probable cause of reluctance to write has been determined by these researchers to include the following:

1. Lack of editing skills - mechanics, spelling, grammar
2. Handwriting struggles
3. Lack of motivation
4. Lack of writing for a purpose
5. Lack of confidence based on previous experience

Although handwriting struggles have been shown to have an effect on writing motivation, the three sites lack access to word processors in the amounts necessary for this cause to be investigated. Lack of confidence based on prior writing experiences could not be controlled or monitored by these researchers. Therefore, the probable causes that can be most affected by the researchers involved deal with lack of motivation, lack of writing for a purpose, and being in an environment where the students don't feel comfortable sharing and experimenting with their writing. Specific techniques, strategies, and methods of writing instruction which have been identified through literature will be used at the three sites to determine if writing reluctance of the targeted students can be reduced.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

After a review of current research on writing, the researchers discovered that many of the suggested strategies for teaching writing had similar components. "Writing and exposing one's own thoughts is risky business," (Bunce-Crim, 1991). Children need to feel comfortable in their writing environment so they can feel safe to take risks. For this project the researchers have grouped the strategies into three main categories: using process writing in a predictable format, purposeful writing, and portfolio assessment. Therefore, the following literature review is divided into these three sections.

Writing Process

The term "Writer's Workshop" was commonly used by researchers to describe the writing process. This process is a step-by-step approach that helps students to develop an understanding of their writing. "It is the heart of the writing class" (Atwell, 1987).

"Children need to know that Writer's Workshop will take place on certain days at certain times" (Bunce-Crim, 1991). Establishing this routine, allows students the opportunity to think about and plan their writing before the workshop begins. The first step in a Writer's Workshop always includes the development of topics and ideas. Brainstorming lists, graphic organizers, and story maps are tools the students will find useful.(Appendix D)

Drafting, the next stage of the Writer's Workshop process, is the stage in which the students put their prewriting plans into effect. According to Cummings (1994), the important part of this step is to keep the students focused on "crafting their messages," not worrying about errors in writing conventions.

Step three usually involves revising and editing the rough draft. A revision checklist (Appendix E) will be used to help students determine if their message is clear and contains enough details. Editing is the point in which students "put the final polish on their piece by reading it over carefully with an eye to rules of usage, mechanics, and spelling" (Cummings, 1994). Making the necessary corrections leads into the final step of the writing process. Scheduling time for the students to work on drafts and conference with peers and the teacher is highly beneficial. Mini-lessons directed by the teacher are an integral part of the writing process. The topics and frequency of mini-lessons should be determined by class needs. "By giving ten-minute mini-lesson once a week that focus on one convention, you can help children expand their repertoire" (Graves, 1995).

The final stage of the writing process includes publication of the students' work and sharing it with an audience. "The publishing stage is also a time for celebration, when your students can gain recognition and take pride in the product that came from all their careful efforts" (Cummings, 1994). This also becomes the time for assessment. The students may choose a piece of writing from their collection to include in the portfolios.

Purposeful Writing

Writing helps us know what we think and think about what we know. "For many children, writing simply has no connection to everyday events." "I can tell you that the most important thing you can help children understand is why people write" (Graves, 1994, 1996).

It is important to familiarize students with different types of purposeful writing. Giving them a freedom of choice of genre, teachers suggested the

following monthly topics: correspondence, poetry, research report, and fictional narrative.

Portfolio Assessment

The keeping of portfolios for writing encourages a writer's self assessment (Paulson et al. 1991, Tierney et al. 1991). Portfolio assessment offers students a way to take charge of their learning; it also encourages ownership, pride and self-esteem (Frazier and Paulsen, 1992). Frazier and Paulsen (1992) indicate that "Portfolios were a means through which " we" could provide feedback, monitor their (writer's) progress and report to parents." Research suggests that students can select goals to improve their writing and/or skill oriented checklists or punctuation guides.

One benefit to portfolio assessment is self reflection and self-evaluation fostered by tagging articles with comments like "If I did this again I'd...", "My work made me think about..." or "This is what I have to say about this..." Another benefit can be the documentation of a student's improvement and success as they find their voice as writers. This portfolio can provide "... a rich source of authentic information that we need in order to assess what is really happening in writing programs." (Frazier and Paulsen, 1992)

Project Objectives and Solution Components

As a result of our intervention strategies during September, 1996 to January, 1997 the fourth and fifth grade students of the targeted group will decrease their reluctance to write, as measured by parent and student surveys, teacher observation checklists and timed writing samples. Each site will integrate these strategies in several ways. All three sites will use the Writer's Workshop instruction method, develop several purposeful writing projects and establish portfolio assessment for writing. In order to accomplish the objective of lowering the targeted students' reluctance towards writing, the following processes are necessary as outlined in the action plan:

Action Plan for Intervention

I. Population

A. Site A - fifth grade

B. Site B - 2 fifth grades, 1 fourth grade

C. Site C - fifth grade

II. Methods of assessment

A. Purpose:

To identify targeted students relevant to the study and to assess the effects of the intervention

B. Schedule:

1. September, 1996 - January, 1997: length of study
2. September, 1996: pre-intervention data collection
3. January, 1997: post-intervention data collection

C. Tools:

1. Writing Surveys
   a. Parent: Pre-intervention & post-intervention
   b. Student: Pre-intervention & post-intervention
2. Timed Writing Samples
   a. Pre-intervention & post-intervention
   b. Pre: The best thing that happened this summer...
   c. Post: The best and worst things about fourth/fifth grade...
3. Teacher observation checklist
4. Writing portfolios
5. Conferencing
   a. Teacher/student
   b. Student/student
   c. Teacher/parent
   d. Student/parent

III. Writer's Workshop Components

A. Purpose:

The use of Writer's Workshop will increase student use of writing strategies and develop skills needed for successful written communication.

B. Schedule:

Writer's Workshop activities will take place a minimum of three times a week for 45-60 minutes per session.

C. Activities:

1. Set up a print rich environment
2. Writing process is modeled by the teacher and then used by students during writing time.
3. Mini-lessons will be used frequently to teach writing skills and the writing process (skills covered: grammar, mechanics, story format, spelling, writing styles, transitional words, editing skills).
4. A comfortable setting will be available for students to share their progress and work with a large group.
5. Conferencing will occur on an as needed basis. Teacher/student conferences will be initiated and guided by the student.
6. Numerous writing tools, including a computer, will be available for student publishing.

IV. Authentic Writing Components

A. Purpose:

To foster a positive attitude toward writing

B. Schedule:

Authentic writing activities will take place throughout the 45-60 minute sessions of Writer's Workshop.

C. Activities:

1. September: Correspondence
2. October: Poetry Publishing
3. November: Research Report
4. December/January: Fictional Narrative

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of the Intervention

The terminal objective in this action plan addressed writing reluctance of fourth and fifth grade students. As a result of systemic writing instruction during September 1996 to January 1997, the fourth and fifth grade students of the targeted group will increase their interest and willingness to put their thoughts down on paper. This increase will be measured by teacher observation, comparison of pre and post-intervention parent and student surveys and timed writing counts (Appendix A-C, F). Research and teacher observations were instrumental in the development of the strategic procedures that would be used by the researchers to accomplish this objective. The implementation of prewriting, during writing and postwriting strategies were selected to effect the desired improvements.

The strategy entitled Writer's Workshop was implemented for its prewriting, during writing and post writing techniques. The original plan called for Writer's Workshop to be implemented during September, 1996 thru January, 1997. All five targeted classrooms began on schedule. All intervention strategies were scheduled to end by early February. However, due to both student and teacher interest, Writer's Workshop was carried out through April of 1997 and

continued through the end of the school year. The post data collection for the research occurred in early February, 1997.

The action plan originally stated that Writer's Workshop activities would take place a minimum of three times a week for 45-60 minutes per session. This proved to be an accurate timing of this intervention in all five classrooms during the first two months. As the intervention period progressed, scheduling conflicts and the end of year holidays interfered with this time table. However, the middle of January found all five classrooms back on schedule.

Before intervention could begin, the researchers needed to establish a print-rich environment. In all settings, students were exposed to the printed word in a variety of ways. An abundance of published materials were provided by both teachers and students to allow for experiences with many styles of and purposes for writing.

The environment was adjusted to provide the students with a comfortable setting to share in their progress and work with a large group. Specific areas were designated as independent/quiet writing areas, conferencing corners, author's chair for group sharing, and a published work center. In each of these areas materials were provided to assist the students in the tasks at hand. For example, reference materials, graphic organizers, and computers were available in the writing areas, colored pens and editing checklists helped the conferencing process, and comfortable seating and colorful displays added to areas focused on finished work.

Teacher modeled writing aided in student understanding of the process and importance of the printed word. By writing with the students, they were given a first-hand experience with real solutions to real problems. The researchers would share their thought processes concerning mundane topics such as "riding a bike" and engaging the audience in their own writing. Asking for student feedback would directly involve the students in all steps of the writing

process and allow them the opportunity to carry that information to their own products and better help their peers when revising and editing.

The most important component of the intervention was the introduction of writing strategies. Each researcher followed a six step plan, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, teacher conferencing and publishing. The weaknesses that these researchers noted in student's writing skills were addressed through mini-lessons, which were taught prior to a writer's workshop session. These mini-lessons varied from classroom to classroom based on the needs of the students, grade level, and each district's curricula. However, the mini-lessons focused on process writing, basic punctuation skills, grammatical issues, and the development of creative writing.

During the course of this intervention, a variety of writing genres were composed by the students. Samples of these genres included authentic writing in the form of persuasive and pen pal letters, poetry, fictional narratives, and research papers in which a variety of topics were explored.

Presentation and Analysis of Results

In order to assess the effects of the intervention strategies, each site used 3 post intervention methods: a post parent writing survey and post student writing survey, a post timed writing sample, and a tally of the last month's writing observation checklists.

Table 2

Pre- & Post-Intervention Parent Writing Survey

	Enjoys writing			Sees writing at home			Spelling interferes with writing		
		Pre-	Post-		Pre-	Post-		Pre-	Post-
Site A	Frequently	24%	36%	Frequently	28%	36%	Frequently	12%	4%
	Sometimes	68%	52%	Sometimes	48%	52%	Sometimes	36%	24%
	Rarely	8%	12%	Rarely	24%	12%	Rarely	52%	72%
Site B: Class 1	Frequently	24%	5%	Frequently	36%	24%	Frequently	28%	29%
	Sometimes	64%	76%	Sometimes	52%	48%	Sometimes	56%	33%
	Rarely	12%	19%	Rarely	12%	29%	Rarely	16%	33%
Site B: Class 2	Frequently	20%	52%	Frequently	20%	29%	Frequently	55%	10%
	Sometimes	60%	43%	Sometimes	50%	42%	Sometimes	30%	33%
	Rarely	20%	5%	Rarely	30%	29%	Rarely	15%	57%
Site B: Class 3	Frequently	22%	29%	Frequently	31%	17%	Frequently	22%	17%
	Sometimes	52%	58%	Sometimes	43%	70%	Sometimes	30%	50%
	Rarely	26%	13%	Rarely	26%	13%	Rarely	48%	33%
Site C	Frequently	27%	46%	Frequently	20%	30%	Frequently	53%	15%
	Sometimes	60%	46%	Sometimes	73%	62%	Sometimes	33%	15%
	Rarely	13%	86%	Rarely	7%	8%	Rarely	14%	70%

The post parent surveys (Appendix B) were sent home with students in early February, 1997 and returned to school. Each site received at least 90% of the responses returned. The parent surveys were used to evaluate the children's experiences with writing and the parent's perspectives on what their children's abilities and opinions towards writing were after the intervention period. These results, by site, are presented in Table 2.

The intervention methods seem to have increased student's enjoyment of writing and to have decreased spelling fears as a deterrent to writing according to the parents. Parent writing modeling at home also shows gains as reflected in Table 2.

Results of the student's writing survey (Appendix F) given in February at each of the sites is reported below. These results are reported by site.

At site A, seven of a possible 25 students were targeted as reluctant writers. In the post survey, five of these 7 targeted students now answer "Yes" to the question "Are you a writer?" an increase of 42% These children now report that a good writer practices writing in a journal or writing letters to pen pals, researches a topic, puts lots of thought into a piece, and concentrates on the subject as well as checking for spelling and grammar mistakes that they reported on the pre-survey. Purposes for writing for these children now include "expressing ideas and communicating with people", "expressing feelings", " to get a job or getting into college." At this time they feel teachers look for detailed descriptions and good imagination, "making sense and fitting with the subject" and "completeness in thought" rather than the error free copies the students reported on the pre-survey. The children currently decide what to write by using a topic chart, perusing other author's books, and "thinking of a story and deciding if I'd like to write it." Of these seven, four now indicate that they never write at home and three still do not like others reading their writing. Surprisingly, three of these children report in this survey disliking writing, as opposed to six originally reporting happiness during writing. Regarding a change in attitude towards writing, four students indicate no change, they have "always found it fun." The remaining three feel that now writing is not so bad and one indicates he "needs to write more."

At Site B, Class 1, five of a possible 25 students were targeted as reluctant writers. In the post survey, four of the five targeted students still answered "No" to the question "Are you a writer?" All five continue to report that a good writer needs a lot of practice, must be neat and spell words correctly. These children feel that people write for the fun of it and to "tell what's going on." Their current opinions are that teachers look for lots of paragraphs, correct punctuation and

spelling, and good handwriting. In order to decide what to write, these children still believe they need to think about ideas. They want to write about something they like and something fun. Now they all think many details in a paragraph are important. Of these five reluctant writers, four indicate they never write at home. One relates that she writes once or twice a week. While earlier in the year only three mentioned that they did not like others reading their writing, all five currently said "No" to wanting to share their writing with others. Their feelings were "I don't feel right sharing,"... "I think they won't like it,"... and "it's private." Their mixed feelings about writing continue. Two sort of like it, one feels okay, one thinks it's no good, and the fifth continues to "HATE IT!" When asked if their feelings toward writing have changed, three indicated no difference and two felt they got better.

At Site B, Class 2, five of a possible 20 students were targeted as reluctant writers. In the post survey, all the targeted students now answered "Yes" to the question "Are you a writer?" an increase of 100%. Two of the five children now report you need a good imagination to write. One wrote, "You have to have good ideas." Another stated that you have to know the writing process. Two children feel that people write for fun and amusement, another stated it was a hobby. Two others write notes to friends, pen pal letters, thank you letters, and to tell about "things." The children decide what to write by thinking of things they like, ideas from books, and dreams. Of the five writers, two indicate they write at home, one sometimes, and two not at all. Two students like others reading their writings, two stated that it was okay sometimes, and one did not want others to read their writing. When asked how they now feel about writing, two "love it," two "like it," and one states, "it's O.K." When asked how their feelings changed towards writing, two now state their stories are more interesting, two feel their ideas haven't changed, while one stated, "I don't know."

At Site B, Class 3, six of a possible 25 students were targeted as reluctant writers. In the post survey, all six of the targeted students now answer "Yes" to the question "Are you a writer?" These children now report that a good writer needs to know writing skills, to like writing, to be organized and practice writing, to have a good thinking mind, and good spelling skills and patience to write well. For purposes on why people write, the children now explain that people write because it is what they love to do, to get a good education, to make books, for a job, and so "I can give a girl a poem." In their opinion, teachers look for good details, and not just lists, spelling, best efforts given, and creativity when deciding about good pieces of writing. The children now make decisions about what to write by taking off with a good idea and writing away, thinking about different topics, getting help from friends, using the way they are feeling, using lists, and by what the teacher asks students to write about. Of these six targeted students, three say they still do not write at home, while the other three indicate they write nightly, weekly, or monthly. All six indicate that they like others to read their writing. The children's responses to how they feel about writing are very similar to the results of the pre-writing survey. They continue to mention that they feel good, happy, fine, and excited.

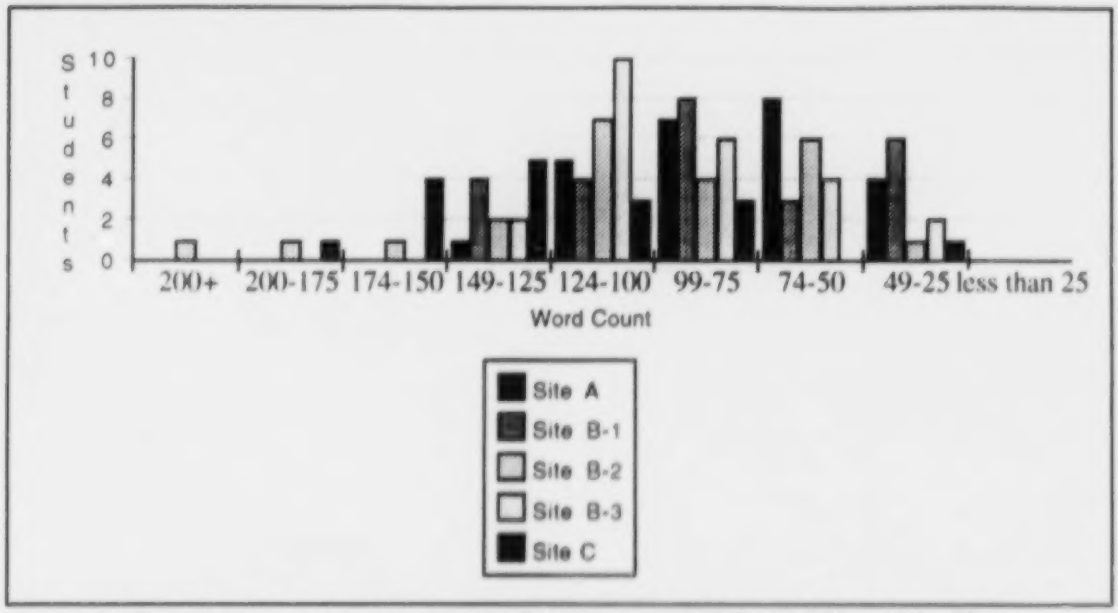
At site C, three of a possible 15 students were targeted as reluctant writers. Two of these students now consider themselves writers. In order to be able to write well, one student feels they need to have good punctuation, capitalization, and spelling skills, while the other two feel that all they need is a pencil, a piece of paper, and a good mind, or proper grammar, originality and the right words. It was the belief of these students that people write to express feelings and to keep in touch. According to these targeted students, teachers decide if a piece of writing is good by which ones had the most effort put in, by using the five finger editing process, and if it has a good beginning and makes sense. When asked how they decide what to write, the students responded, "I think about what I have done in

my life or I see in a movie and I put that in my own words," "I do not really know, I just use my mind," and "I write what pops into my head." One of the students continues to write at home regularly, another recently has begun to write at home more often, but only if he "did something really cool that same day," and the third student continues to not write at home. Two students are now uncomfortable with others reading their writing, and the other will let anybody who wants to read his writing. When asked about their current feelings about writing, two students expressed positive feelings, stating they like it and feel good about it. The third student explained his dislike for writing in the following manner: "Since I am a more bodily/kinesthetic person than a verbal/linguistic person, I think writing is not very fun." Two students feelings about writing have changed for the positive; "I like it better as I get older because more things are happening to me," and "they have changed from the start of the year a lot!" The third targeted student stated that his feelings for writing have not changed.

Post intervention timed writing samples were taken during early February, 1997. Words counted were identified by their understandability to each researcher. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation problems were ignored. All researchers used the same prompt, "What are the best and worst things about being in fourth (fifth) grade?" Each class was given two minutes of think time and ten minutes of actual writing time. Whole class results are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Post-Intervention Word Count Totals



At Site A, post intervention word counts ranged from 139 to 36. The targeted students' word counts fell in the 60 to 36 range. Two students showed and increase of less than 10%, four students improved 20 to 40%, and two students showed a dramatic increase of 90% and 155%. Site B has three classes reporting data. Class 1 post intervention word counts ranged from 135 to 37 words with targeted students' word counts, also falling into this range. They showed improvements at 32%, 68%, and 133%. One student showed no increase. The fifth student showed a decrease of 38%. Class 2 post intervention word counts ranged from 235 to 45 words with targeted student's counts ranging between 116 and 45. The targeted students' word counts showed improvements of 79%, 138%, 190%, and an outstanding 356%. Only one student showed a decrease of 10%. Class 3 post intervention word counts ranged form 143 to 37. Improvements for the targeted students were 13%, 56%, 66%, and 200%! However, two students shared a decrease of 22% and 61%. At Site C, post intervention word counts ranged from 190 to 39. There were only three targeted students at this site, and each students

showed an increase in their word counts. Two of the students improved 69% and the third, 43%.

At the sites, each researcher kept a writing observation checklist (Appendix G) for each of the targeted students. The checklist was used monthly for the intervention period. Writing pieces were selected randomly by each researcher.

Of the writing behaviors observed, all three sites noted improvements. All targeted students showed gains of at least 50% in the behaviors involving information organization and use of transition words. All targeted students improved in revising and editing skills. Site A and C's targeted students showed gains of at least 70% of the display of a willing attitude towards writing. Site B's targeted students gained the most in using clear, understandable information. These researchers observed massive gains of at least 80% in the targeted students writing independently, including supporting details, and topic self-selection.

Some of the above data was also determined by researcher perusal of each targeted students' writing portfolio. These portfolios followed slightly different formats in each researchers' classroom. All sites shared these portfolio features: student selection of portfolio pieces, central location of pieces, and student tagging procedures.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the presentation and analysis of the data on Writer's Workshop, the majority of the targeted students showed a positive response to the interventions. The students exhibited growth in the writing strategies they used. Generally, student attitudes toward writing also improved.

Fourth and fifth grade students performed at various ability levels within each classroom. The researchers feel the interventions were successful at all sites.

The success of this project was influenced by organizing our classrooms in an environment that fostered writing. In this atmosphere, children were willing to take risks without feeling their dignity was threatened. By establishing a consistent routine, many students looked forward to Writer's Workshop. Some even worked on pieces during their free time, others wanted to take pieces home to type on their computer as a part of the publishing process.

During Writer's Workshop, children were instructed at a level that was developmentally appropriate. The mini-lessons implemented by the researchers allowed specific writing skills to be reviewed or introduced when needed. Rather than following grade level textbook guidelines in writing and grammar, the teachers observed students during the writing process to see what skills were needed. After skill needs were identified, the researchers designed lessons that were appropriate for their students. Writing skills were improved due to the mini-lessons that were presented.

To initiate a Writer's Workshop program, there needs to be time to organize all of the necessary components. Materials for drafting, revising, editing, and publishing need to be gathered and arranged in a manner that makes them readily available to all students. A filing system to store student writings also needs to be developed.

Once the physical set-up is in place, daily schedules need to be organized to allow for a large block of time. These researchers feel the benefits far outweigh the time needed to implement the program. This program could work well in all school settings including multi-level and multi-cultural classrooms.

The inability to change some of the targeted students' negative attitudes towards writing was a frustration to the researchers. The researchers observed an improvement in all targeted students' writing abilities. Perhaps there will always be students who have strong feelings on particular topics, like writing, that interventions will be unable to change.

Overall, the researchers were pleased with the outcomes of the interventions, not only for the targeted students but the class as a whole. Writer's Workshop will continue to be an integral part of the language arts program at all three sites next year. The research conducted will be shared with other staff members at the site locations. The researchers will share with administrators that "a Writer's Workshop program," according to Atwell (1987) "is cheap to implement, and by giving them time, we give students one of the basic necessities of a writer. Then we'll begin to make writers."

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Student Writing Survey

1. Are you a writer?_____(If your answer is YES, answer question 2. If your answer is NO, answer 3.)

2. How did you learn to write?

3. How do people learn to write?

4. Why do people write?

5. What do you think a good writer needs to do in order to write well?

6. How does your teacher decide which pieces of writing are the good ones?

7. What kinds of writing do you like to do?

8. How do you decide what to write?

9. Do you ever revise or edit a piece of writing? If so, describe what you do.

10. Do you ever write at home just because you want to?_____ If so, how often do you write at home (just because you want to)?

11. Who or what has influenced your writing? How?

12. Do you like to have others read your writing?_____ Who?

13. In general, how do you feel about writing?

Appendix B
Parent Letter and Writing Survey

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This year, I am participating in a Masters Program in Education. As part of this program, I am required to complete an action research project involving the students. The project will focus on writing and will require the conduction of normal classroom procedures and documenting their effects.

I am asking for voluntary participation in this research. Any participation will not affect your child's progress reports in any way. Your child's identity will also remain anonymous.

Attached to this letter is a survey about your observations of your child's writing habits at home. Please complete the survey and the form at the bottom of this letter and return both to me by September 15, 1996.

If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to call me at the school. Thank you for participating in and helping to improve my professional growth through this research.

Sincerely,

_____ Yes, my child will participate in the Action Research Project.

_____ No, I do not want my child to participate in the Action Research Project.

_____ _____

Parent's Signature Date

Name: _____ Date:_____

Please circle or check the most appropriate answer.

1. Does your child enjoy writing?

   rarely sometimes frequently

2. Does your child have the opportunity to see you writing at home?

   rarely sometimes frequently

3. Does your child write at home?

   rarely sometimes frequently

4. If your child does write at home, does he/she write:

   independently with your help

5. What does your child enjoy writing?

   _____ letters
   _____ stories
   _____ poems
   _____ diary/journal
   _____ other: _____

6. Is your child willing to share his/her writing?

   rarely sometimes frequently

7. Do you think spelling interferes with your child's writing?

   rarely sometimes frequently

8. Do you have concerns about your child becoming a writer?

   rarely sometimes frequently

9. Please feel free to add any additional comments about your child's writing on the back.

Appendix C
Timed Writing Prompts

Pre-Intervention

The best thing that happened this summer...

Post-Intervention

What are the best and worst things about being in fourth or fifth grade?

Appendix D
Student Forms

IDEAS FOR STORYTELLING

Please ask me about the three ideas I've checked:

_____ a special toy

_____ my pet

_____ what I'm good at

_____ the best party

_____ what I really like

_____ a special place

_____ what I'm most proud of

_____ my brother/sister

_____ my favorite time of year

_____ a first time experience

_____ what moving was like

_____ a special discovery

_____ my worst day

_____ a scary experience

_____ the things I collect

_____ someone who is special to me

_____ what I'm afraid of

_____ the worst party

_____ what I really can't stand

_____ how I've changed

_____ what I'm sorry about

_____ someone I miss a lot

_____ being jealous

_____ a time I helped someone

_____ being lost

_____ a story someone told me

_____ my best day

_____ what I did when I was little

My Ideas

Name _____ School Year _____

WRITING GENRE CHART

Number of Completed Pieces

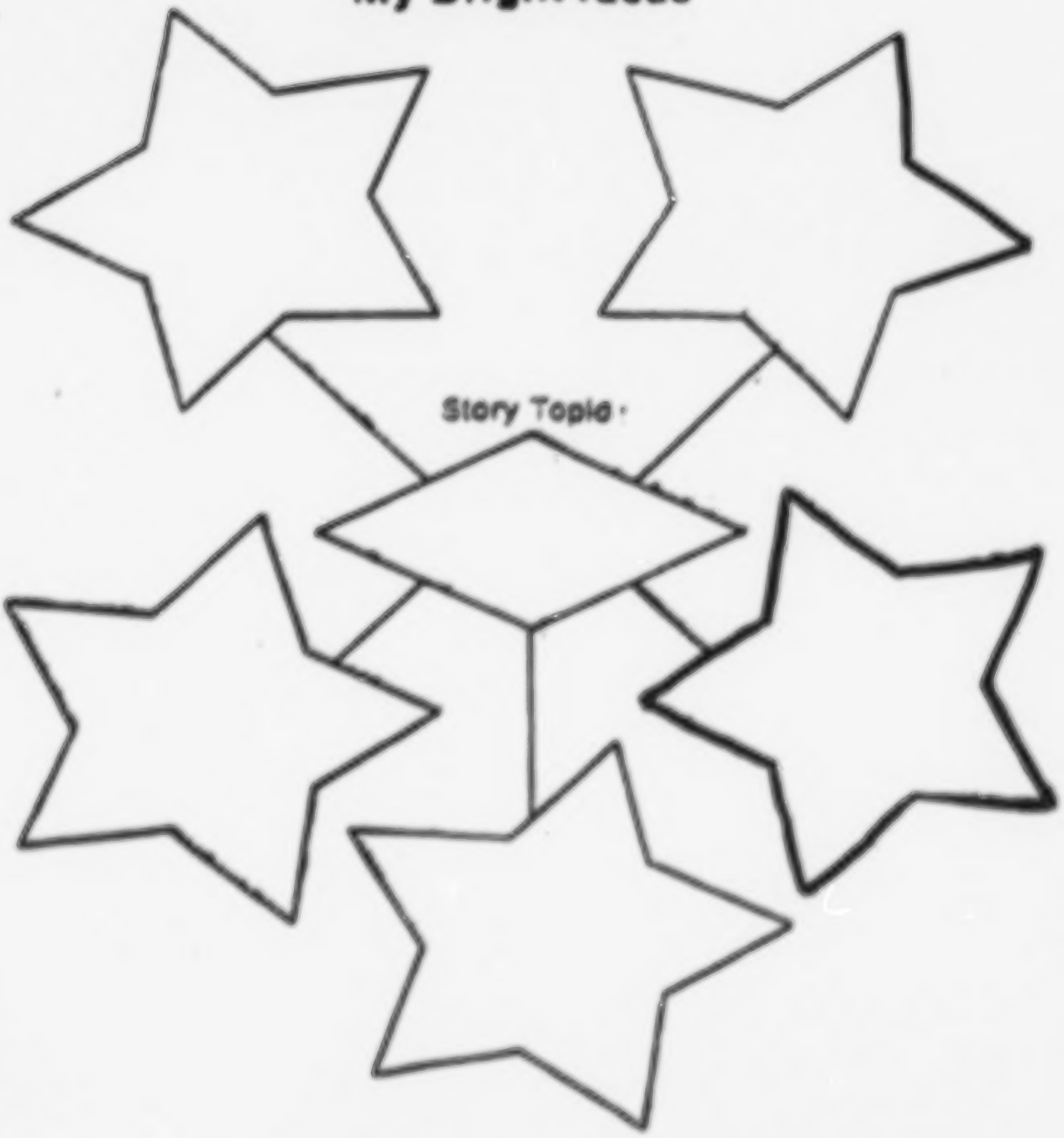
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
personal experience										
memoir										
informational article or report										
letter										
poem/song										
fantasy										
realistic fiction										
myth/legend folktale										
play										
news story										
"how-to"										
brochure or guidebook										

Yellow — Sept. – Nov.

Red — Dec. – March

Blue — April – June

My Bright Ideas



TOPIC CHART

People I Know	Feelings I Have
Places I've Been	Things I Think About
Things I've Done	Special Ideas

Story Map

Title:

Setting:

Characters:

Problem:

Event 1.	
Event 2.	
Event 3.	
Event 4.	

Solution:

Name: _____

Setting

TITLE:

Characters

Problem

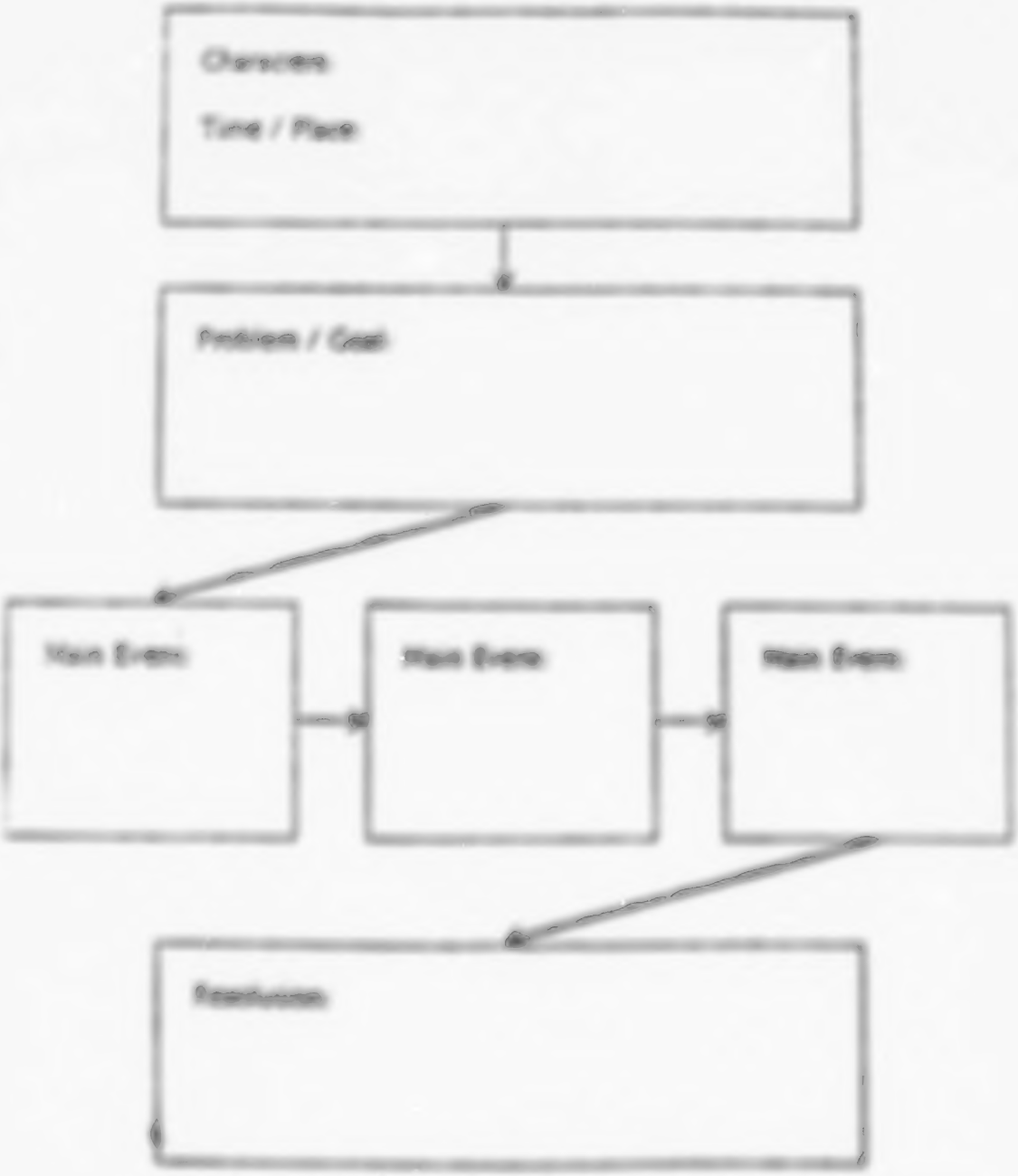
Event

Event

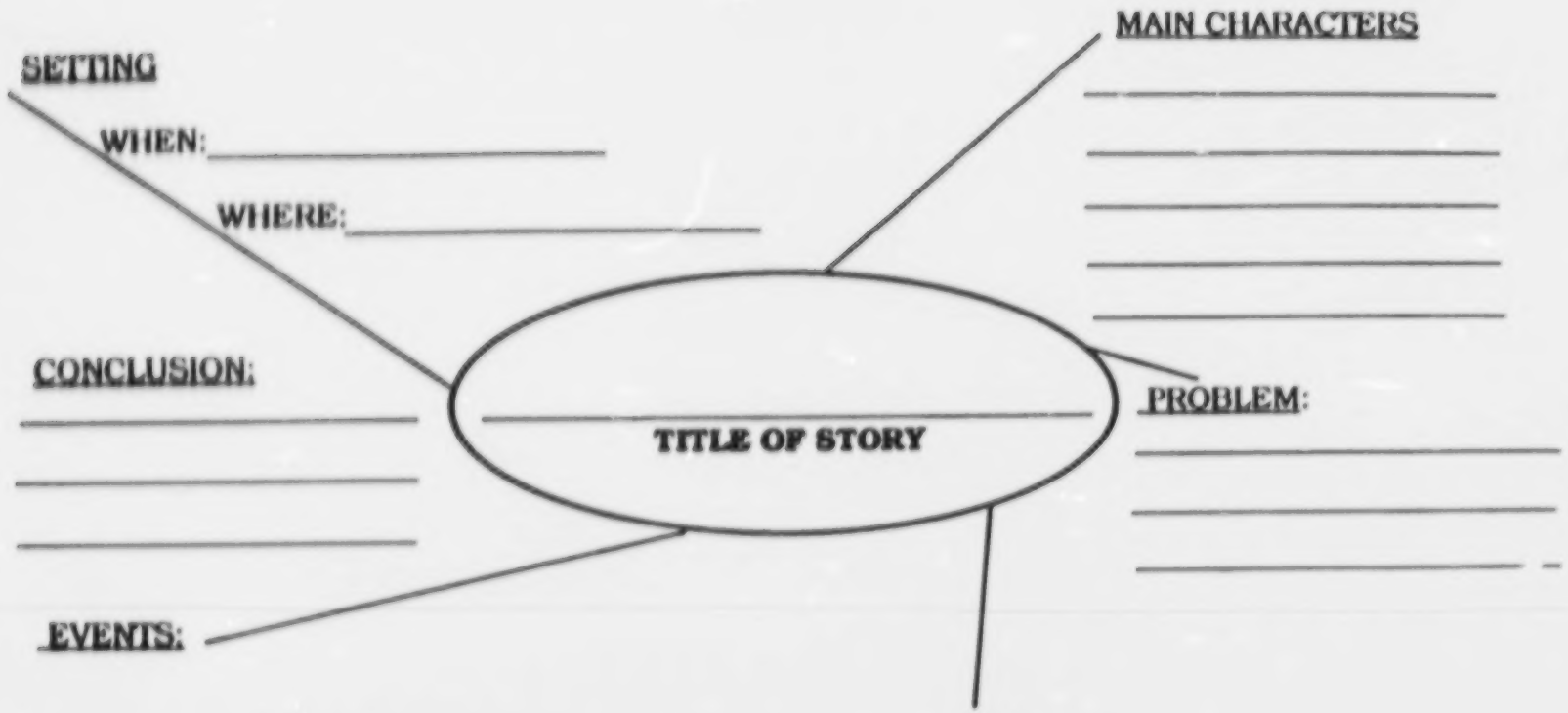
Event

Solution

Story Map


Characters
Time / Place
Problem / Goal
Main Event
Main Event
Main Event
Resolution

STORY MAP

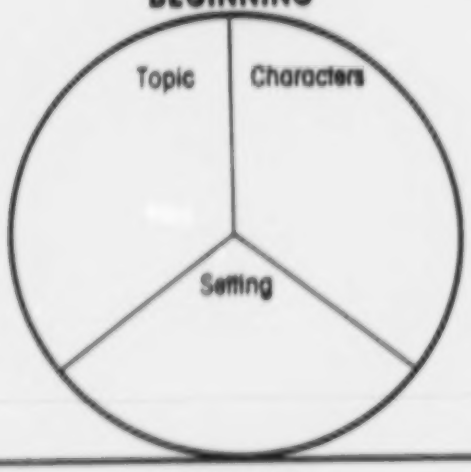


1.
2.
3.
4.

STORY MAP

Title: _____

BEGINNING



MIDDLE

First . . .

Next . . .

Then . . .

END

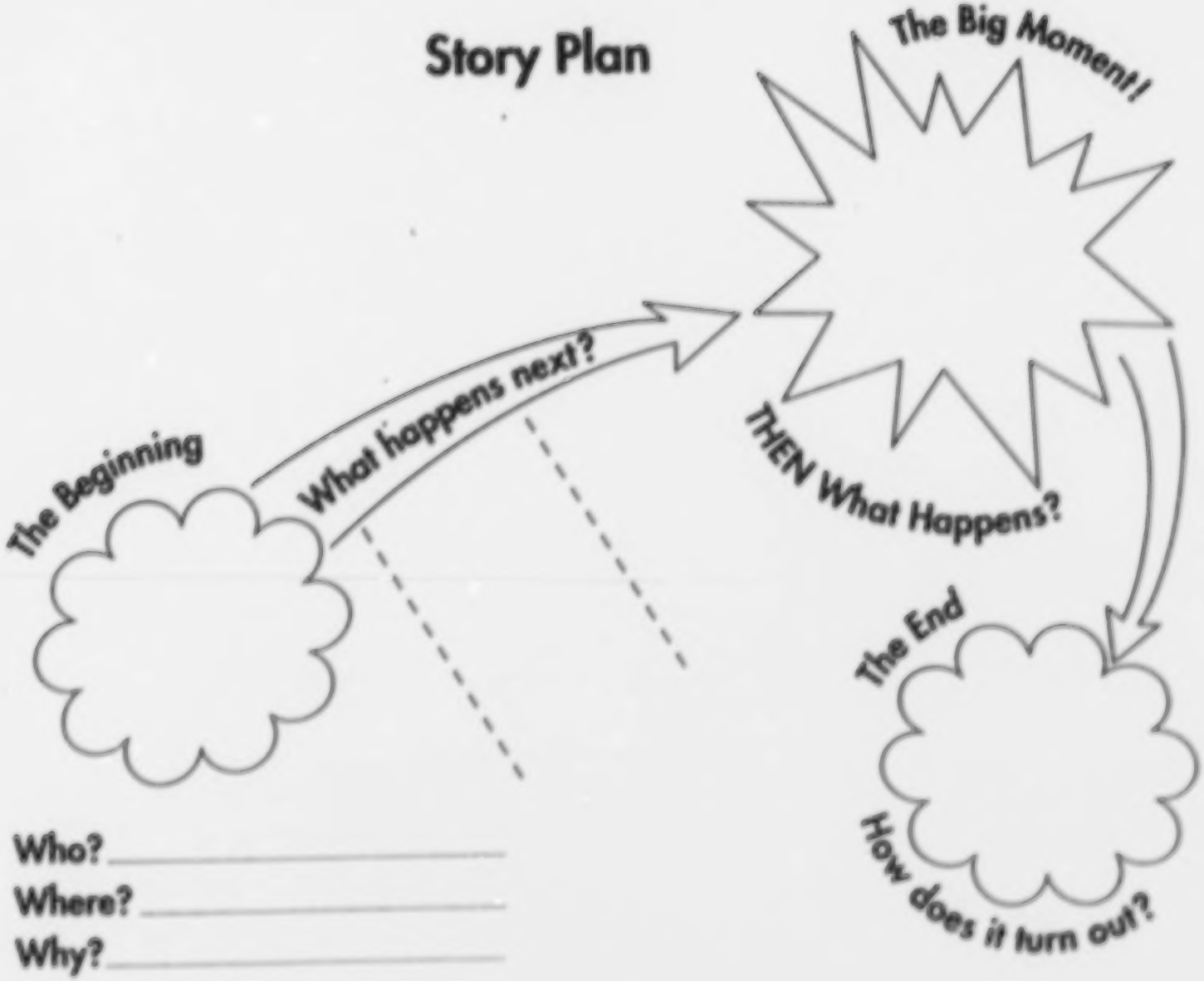
Finally . . .

Story Squares

Name _____

Setting	Plot
Character 1	**Character 2**
Character 3	**Problem**
Solution	

Story Plan



Who? _____

Where? _____

Why? _____

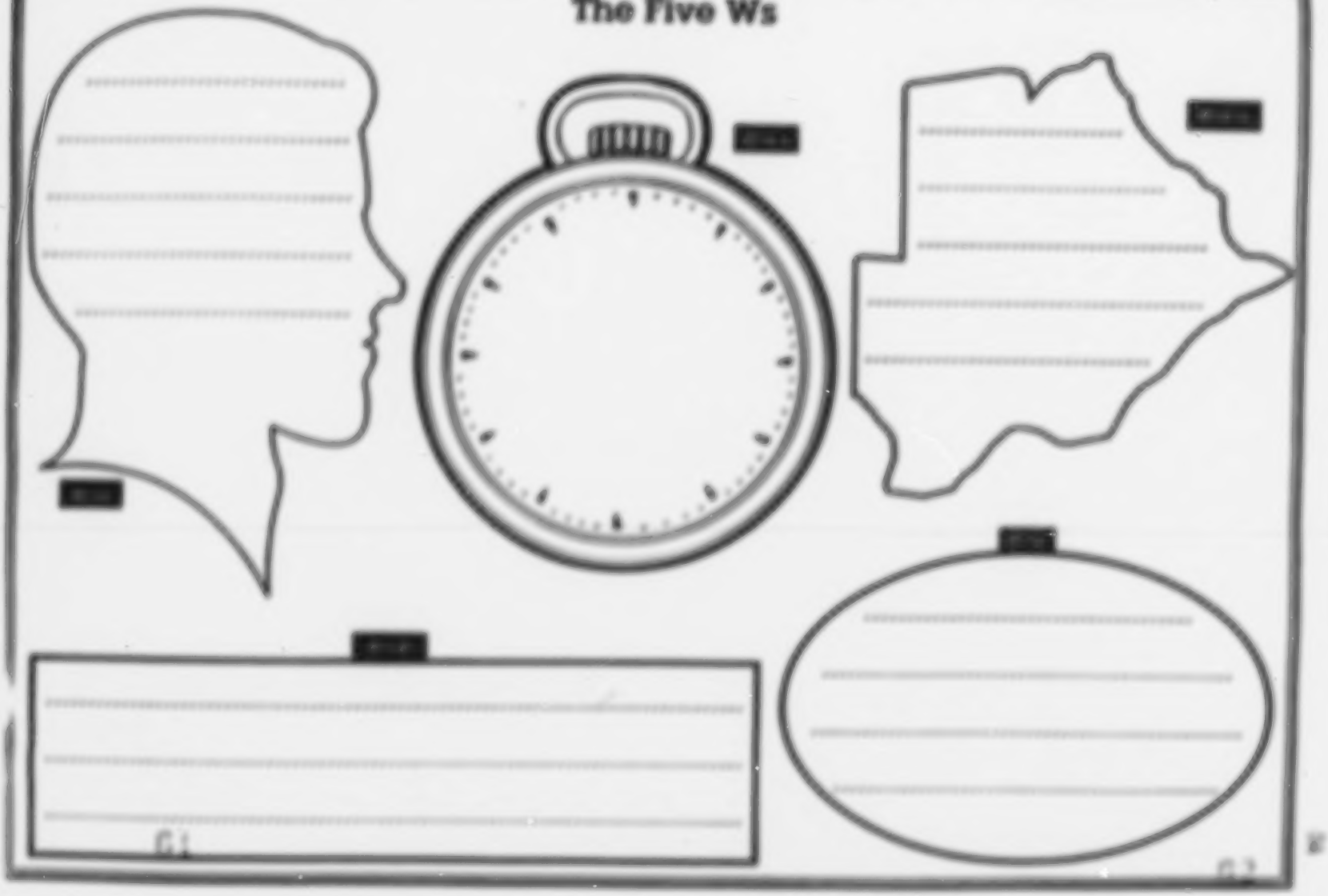
Name _____

Story Pyramid

Title of the book: _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Five Ws



FIVE-STEP EDITING

Editor's Marks

After you have written your draft and gotten a response from someone else, edit the draft using these editor's marks. They are the standard marks used.

If you are ready for a challenge, try making up marks of your own!

Proofreading Marks		
Editor's Mark	*Meaning*	*Example*
≡	Capitalize	[illegible]
/	Make lower case	[illegible]
⊙	Add a period	[illegible]
sp.	Spelling mistake	[illegible]
⌒	Reverse words or letters	[illegible]
^	Add a word	[illegible]
◊	Add a comma	[illegible]
⁀	Delete (Do not do it)	[illegible]

REFLECTING ON MY WRITING

Name_____ Date_____

Title of Writing_____

I chose this because_____

This shows that I'm good at_____

Next time, I'd like to try _____

write about it

PEER REFLECTION

My name_____ Portfolio Piece_____ Date_____

My favorite part of your portfolio is _____

because_____

_____

I notice that you're good at _____

_____

I think your best piece of writing is _____

because_____

_____

_____

Something I learned from you is _____

_____

_____

Signature

Peer Revision Worksheet

Author's Name: Reviewer's Name:

Title:

	Not So Hot	Good	Great
Is the opening sentence or paragraph stated clearly?			
Are the details given in order?			
Do the details support the main idea of the piece?			
Are there paragraphs?			
Do the sentences vary within the writing?			
Are transition words used? (first, therefore, finally: Look them)			
Is the closing stated clearly in a sentence or paragraph?			

Good Things in the Writing	Changes in the Writing Use

Peer Share Guide

Writer_____

Reader(s)_____

Title_____

1. One thing you said that really interested me is:

What you say makes me think about:

2. Questions I have about what you've said are:

3. The main idea of you paper is (Quote it if the writer has said it. Put it together if he or she hasn't said it.):

4. Your details
   - ___ are specific, accurate, and or supportive.
   - ___ need to be more specific, accurate, and or supportive.

5. The organization of you paper
   - ___ is fine as it is.
   - ___ could benefit from the following changes in this order:

6. Paragraphs breaks are
   - ___ in sensible places.
   - ___ would help the reader if they were in the places marked with a ¶ .

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7. Your sentences

   ____ are all complete.

   ____ include _____(#) that are incomplete.

8. Your editing

   ____ is thorough and complete.

   ____ needs to focus on the following areas _____

Kind Compliments

Ask your friends, teacher, parents and classmates to give you positive feedback on your work.

I like the way you:

Signed by

Your work made me think about:

Signed by

I enjoyed

Your story was interesting because

Signed by

This is what I have to say about your story

Signed by

I enjoyed

I enjoyed

Signed by

I learned this from you:

Signed by

My favorite part is

Signed by

I enjoyed reading about

Signed by

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Appendix E
Peer Revision Checklist

Answer yes or no.

1. Is there a clear beginning?
2. Does the opening make you want to hear more?
3. Can you understand everything the author tried to say?
4. Is everything in the right order?
5. Does each sentence make sense?
6. Is each sentence complete?
7. Does each sentence sound right?
8. Are some sentences too short? Are some too long?
9. Are there enough descriptive words or phrases?
10. Is there a clear ending?

Appendix F
Student Post Intervention Writing Survey

1. *Are you a writer?*_____/*If your answer is YES, answer question 2. If your answer is NO, answer 3.*

2. *How did you learn to write?*

3. *How do people learn to write?*

4. *Why do people write?*

5. *What do you think a good writer needs to do in order to write well?*

6. *How does your teacher decide which pieces of writing are the good ones?*

7. *What kinds of writing do you like to do?*

8. *How do you decide what to write?*

9. *Do you ever revise or edit a piece of writing? If so, describe what you do.*

10. Do you ever write at home just because you want to?_____ If so, how often do you write at home (just because you want to?

11. Who or what has influenced your writing? How?

12. Do you like to have others read your writing?_____ Who?

13. In general, how do you feel about writing?

14. How have your feelings changed towards writing?

Appendix G
Writing Observation Checklist

Student's Name: _____

Writer's Checklist	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Begins to write independently				
Self selected topics				
Uses clear, understandable information				
Includes supporting details				
Material well-organized				
Uses transition words				
Willing to revise: sentence structure, paragraphing				
Edits as necessary: capitals, spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage, syntax				
Displays a positive, willing attitude towards writing				
Uses time wisely				
Willingness to share products				

Date

X = Always

√ = Sometimes

I = Working